# New South

- Obedience to Law
- Meet, Know, and Listen
- Root Out Bitterness
- Give Positive Witness

DECEMBER 1958

New South

*Published by*

**SOUTHERN REGIONAL COUNCIL**

63 Auburn Avenue, N.E., Atlanta 3, Georgia

• • • • • • • • •

**DECEMBER, 1958**

**Volume 13** **Number 12**

• • • • • • • • •

# Contents

Obedience to Law . . . . . 3

Meet, Know, and Listen . . . . 4

Root Out of Hearts All Bitterness and Hatred . . . . 9

Give Positive Witness . . . . . 14

**Officers**

James McBride Dabbs . . . . . President
Marion A. Wright . . . . . Vice-President
A. W. Dent . . . . . Vice-President
Paul Williams . . . . . Vice-President
Rufus E. Clement
Chairman, Executive Committee
Joseph Haas . . . . . Counsel
Harold C. Fleming . . . Executive Director

**Information Staff**

John Constable . . . Director of Information
Marge Manderson . . . Research Assistant

Subscription rate . . . . . $2.00 a year

New South is published monthly except August by Southern Regional Council, Inc., 63 Auburn Avenue, N.E., Atlanta, Georgia. Single copies may be purchased at twenty cents each; quantity rates on request.

Contributions to the Southern Regional Council are tax-exempt.

## *New South* Notes

Increasingly, religious leaders, as individuals and groups, are speaking out on the question of desegregation and on racial problems in general. Several years ago, *New South* published in a special edition statements of individual church bodies in which they called on persons of good will to work toward an orderly solution to our racial problems.

As desegregation moves nearer to the deep South, there has been increased racial tension; and so, once again, religious leaders are speaking out in an effort to help solve the problem evolving from the segregation controversy. *New South* in this issue reprints statements by the bishops from three leading church groups and reports on statements from two religious bodies.

On November 13, 1958, the Methodist Council of Bishops issued another statement on the race crisis. In this statement, the bishops review earlier statements and renew their plea for all citizens to obey the law.

On October 17, 1958, a pastoral letter from the Protestant Episcopal Bishops was read in the bishops' assembly. The letter, among other things, lists five truths as they see them and calls upon the church membership to seek communication in an effort to solve our current problems.

The third statement, which in tone is in keeping with the other two, is by the Catholic Bishops of the United States and was released November 14, 1958.

The other statements reported on in this issue came from the Eighth Assembly of the United Church Women and from the National Council of Churches.

# Obedience to Law*

## The Methodist Council of Bishops

In November, 1954, the Bishops in their message to the Church gave formal support to the decision of the Supreme Court of May 17, 1954, abolishing segregation in the public-school system. In that statement, we affirmed that the ruling of the High Court was in keeping with the attitude of the Methodist Church as expressed in its official pronouncements, both in the Social Creed and in the episcopal address of 1952. These pronouncements were affirmed in the general conference of 1956.

In addition, the general conference of 1956, apparently anticipating the difficulties which would be involved in the enforcement of the decisions, approved the following statement with respect to the decisions of the Supreme Court relative to segregation:

"The decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States relative to segregation make necessary far-reaching and often difficult community adjustments throughout the nation. We call upon our people to effect these adjustments in all good faith, with brotherliness and patience. In doing this, all racial groups must be willing to admit their imperfections and seek to correct them. Let these things, however, be done in love, lest the cause of Christ suffer at our hands."

We reaffirm our support of the Supreme Court in the decisions relative to segregation in the public-school system, and earnestly urge all our people to accept the rulings of the courts in good faith. We seek with the guidance of the Holy Spirit to create that kind of social climate which will work toward the elimination of friction between any and all racial groups and ultimately achieve the realization of Christian brotherhood in all community relationships — North and South and everywhere in the world.

We heartily commend those lay people, pastors and Bishops who have demonstrated Christian courage in critical areas. In these days of extreme tensions we commend our people who, while not always sharing the same attitudes on integration, are determined to demonstrate in their own lives the qualities of understanding, tolerance and brotherhood.

We are disturbed by a growing disregard of law evidenced by the bombing of synagogues, churches, schools and even private dwellings. We would remind our people that equal justice can be had only under law. To obey the law only when it suits us is to invite others to do likewise, and that ultimately leads to anarchy.

We, therefore, call upon our people to treat obedience to and respect for law as a Christian moral obligation, and to see to it that, if and when any law needs to be revised, strengthened or eliminated, it be done not by resort to force or violence but by legally established legislative procedure.

**Issued November 13, 1958*

# Meet, Know, and Listen

## Pastoral Letter from Protestant Episcopal Bishops

*October 17, 1958*

This letter is written against the background of our unforgettable experience at the recent Lambeth Conference. For forty days we had once again the privilege of meeting with Bishops of the Anglican Communion from many parts of the world. We came from every continent, were members of every race and many nations, and revealed in our fellowship—not only the encouraging growth of our communion—but also that it is part of the Holy Catholic Church which includes members of every race and nation. We saw anew, against the background of the world's terrible divisions, the oneness of mankind in Christ; we saw that "in Christ there is no East or West"; we saw that only a world body, freed from the passions and enmities that divide men, can bring a healing and reconciling word to our world. The Lambeth Conference was a symbol of that unity toward which the whole world groans and travails.

The most urgent and frightening fact in our world is the terrible divisiveness setting men against men—rival nationalisms, opposing philosophies, competing economic systems, and fierce racial tensions. An old order is struggling in pain to be born. In this fierce competition and contest for one solution or another all mankind is swept along. As we dealt with these divisions in our Lambeth deliberations we recognized the stubborn depths of the problem, the passionate fears and resentments that divide men.

We recognized that we in America share this common world problem; for America is divided, not only by deep racial tensions, but by the breakdown of communication between those of different convictions, sometimes even between clergy and people. Since wholeness is health; since division is sorrow

and sickness; since in this terrible world division can mean death, we write to you on the subject of unity and reconciliation. We do so with a great sense of urgency, not to tell you what to do in your specific situations, but rather to share with you five great truths that will help us all to act more truly wherever we may be.

First, even if no report had been issued by Lambeth, it would still have been a notable experience; for at the conference we lived with one another under the same roof, broke bread together, prayed beside one another and knelt side by side at the Holy Communion. We enjoyed the deepest fellowship.

In our world's travail toward unity we would remind you that there is nothing that can take the place of this face-to-face meeting, this deep fellowship, this communion of souls. It is tragically easy to treat other people as "things" and without personal acquaintance to forget that all mankind desires, needs, hopes and fears the same things. The meeting of others is a creative experience, giving to each the knowledge of our common humanity, lifting us out of our private worlds, giving us the humbling knowledge that often our proudest thoughts are not true but the slanted thinking of our particular group, and thus making us more open to God's purposes for us.

Because real meeting elevates the soul and purifies the mind, we ask you, as Christian people, amid all the tensions and visions of our world, to meet and know and listen to your brethren of other races and groups. It was Archbishop William Temple who said that if any man thinks in terms of the common good and seeks the common good, he is a converted man, but such thinking and acting can come only as we rise above our particular groups by a first hand knowledge of, and deep fellowship with, those who are our Brethren in Christ. It was not simply Lambeth which represented mankind; our own Episcopal Church has within its fellowship rich and poor, white and Negro, Orientals, Indians, and Latin Americans. Meet and know your brethren in Christ.

### *Government*

Second, since Lambeth Palace is close to the Houses of Parliament, many of us were led to reflect anew on the meaning of law and government. In Christian thought government is a structure appointed by God for the common good. Its function and responsibility is to care for the outer order and framework of our common life. All of us need to be protected. We need the orderly and impartial administration of justice for the protection of our property, our safety, and our hard-won rights.

St. Paul recognized this when he appealed to Caesar, and when in the Epistle to the Romans he wrote. "The powers that be are ordained by God." The law is a minister of God for good. It is God's instrument. It makes civilized life possible, and enables us to live together in peace. It restrains our selfishness and wildness, and, while it cannot change our hearts, it does provide the indispensable outer framework of our unity.

The people of this land do not need to be reminded at this moment of the evils of tyranny, but we do need to be

## Meet

*(Continued)*

reminded now of the evils of anarchy. Anarchy, the absence of law and order, is a greater evil than tyranny, and leads to tyranny. Anarchy is the absence of order; tyranny is an order of sorts.

It is for this reason that Christians are taught to honor government and to pray for "all Christian rulers, that they may truly and impartially administer justice, to the punishment of wickedness and vice." Without that outer framework of order no unity is possible, and any man who seeks to undermine the rule of impartial justice is inviting disaster for the nation. It is only for the gravest and clearest principle of conscience relating to a serious moral issue that one may contemplate civil disobedience. And, because all order is at stake, such disobedience can only be justified when it is based on a higher ethical principle than the law represents. Never is it right when the disobedience is the expression of a lower ethical standard than the law would enforce. We call upon you, therefore, at this time to honor and obey the laws of this land.

### *Judgment*

Third, we saw vividly at Lambeth the judgment of God upon all our divisions and conflicts. This judgment is a great fact that concerns us all and because of which we all will suffer. The judgment of God—what is it? It is not some extraneous power falling upon us with no relationship to our behavior. It is not the capricious will of any arbitrary tyrant. It is not the opinion of bishops. It is not a quotation from the Bible.

God's judgment is the response of a just God to the offenses of mankind against His living will. It is the inevitable result we bring upon ourselves when we move against the grain of His universe. It is the inevitable result of our inner contradictions. It is God frustrating our purposes when we oppose His will. This judgment is as real as God is, and as powerful, for it is God himself seeing our sins and acting in history to accomplish His will in spite of our sins. You will find the judgment of God reported in your daily newspaper, in the event of history, in the clash and contradiction of rival ambitions and fears, in the hatred and suspicion we earn when we fail to deal justly with those with whom we share this narrow world.

### *Majority*

We must remember that the majority of mankind belongs to the colored races, and that the American racial problem is discussed the world over. Much of the goodwill which early missionaries gained has been lost. Much of the goodwill which our nation once enjoyed has been lost. If America continues to lose friends as others become convinced that we do not mean what we say about justice and equality, the reason will be obvious. The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. These judgments are the plain cost we pay in God's universe for not practicing what we preach, and for not being ready to grant to others the opportunity and equality we cherish for ourselves.

Two strong motives, therefore, should drive us to our duty. One is the love for all men which the Holy Spirit pours into our hearts, the divine spirit that

urges us toward unity. But if our hearts are sometimes dull, let us then do the will of God because the fear of His judgment grips our hearts. "Imprint upon our hearts," says the prayer book, "such a dread of Thy judgments, and such a grateful sense of Thy goodness to us, as may make us both afraid and ashamed to offend Thee." This is God's world, and He punishes us together as we move against His will. If Africa and Asia should turn finally against us, it could well be because the colored races became convinced they must look elsewhere for justice. It is only when we lift our eyes from our immediate problems to see God's reign, His Grace and wrath, that we think and act truly.

Fourth, it must be evident to all that as more than three hundred bishops at Lambeth debated the deepest problems of the day—racial and group tension, nuclear warfare, the problems of the family—that these debates were often charged with the deepest emotion. But our unity was never threatened, because we built—not chiefly on emotion—but on the calm and clear light of reason. Voices were not raised, arguments were never personal, and our fellowship, therefore, was never threatened.

### *Emotion*

The division of the world—national, class, and racial—are always accompanied by deep emotion. But emotion on this subject, as we can observe in many American communities, is deeply divisive. Indeed, in some communities unity is an impossibility because people have in their emotional blocs lost the ability to communicate one with the other. If we build on emotion, the end is conflict.

We need to give a larger place to the liberating, manly, and noble quality of reason. Of course we share with the rest of God's creation on the emotional drives of life—fear, rage and hunger. But part of what the Bible means when it speaks of our being made in God's image is that we can reason. By the calm, impersonal unifying process of shared thought we are set free from the control of passion to find one another and the commonwealth of humanity. If we carefully search for truth, we will be led together to God, who is the source of all truth.

### *Talk Together*

Let us not think that like children we can shout down other people and their wishes and interests. They are not ghosts, nor children to be frightened away. There is only one way for free men to overcome conflict and that is by talking together in reasonable self-control, and thus finding a third way which will lead to peace. Christians who believe in the God Who is the source of all truth ought to be the first ones to claim this privilege of reason.

Therefore, we ask everyone in this nation to keep his voice down, his arguments impersonal, and to recognize "the stubborn depths of the problem, the passionate fears and resentments that divide men." We ask everyone to recognize that reason and not emotion will unite our torn communities, that discussion must be carried on by all without any note of superiority or servility, and that when we confront one another, we are to do so in a brotherly fashion.

## Meet

*(Continued)*

Finally, we speak about the church, to which, by God's mercy, we all belong. We are the church's people; but the church is not ours. It is God's creation, the body of which Jesus Christ is the head and all baptized people are the members. Nobody can destroy it, for it is built on a rock and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Our Lord Christ is mankind's one true hope of unity, for by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free. By His redeeming love Christ has broken down the middle wall of partition between us, and has made us one in Him. And He has given us the honor of sharing that unity, and of continuing his reconciling work. The church, when it truly understands itself, is thus the reconciling community in the life of the national community. And every parish or mission, however small, is the great church at work in its neighborhood, a manifestation at the local level of the all-embracing love of Christ and of the world fellowship rerevealed in part at Lambeth.

In our world, as St. Paul wrote, two spirits contend one with another for the hearts of men. The first spirit is the self-centered spirit of man leading inevitably to hatred and division. The cries of "my class," "my race," "my clan" rend the world community. This is the spirit of the world—the spirit of pride, exclusiveness, and separation. "Now the works of the flesh," says the Apostle are " . . . hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies."

The other spirit ever guiding the church (as we saw at Lambeth and know from this convention) is the spirit of God drawing men together. It is this Holy Spirit Who leads us to love our brethren, who humbles our spirits as they are convicted of sin, Who leads us to a unity not of our making. This spirit raises us above self to see God's will and plan for all men. It is the spirit of humility, of inclusiveness, and of love ever warring against our hard hearts. In our work of reconciliation we must never think of ourselves as alone, but always as guided and sustained by Christ Himself present and working in our midst. "But the fruit of the spirit," says St. Paul, "is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. . . . If we live in the spirit, let us walk in the spirit."

We have spoken about five great truths that can help us to see and do God's will wherever we may be—the creative meeting of souls, the sacredness of law, God's judgment on our divisions, the light of reason, and the membership we share together in the church guided by the spirit.

We said at the beginning that we were not attempting to tell anybody what to do in his specific situation. Provided they have a true perspective, we believe that God's children are quite able to make the necessary, creative decisions which are part of our reconciling task. If we suffer in that endeavor, count it always a privilege to suffer for God and His truth.

Care for your souls, brethren, amid the passions and prejudices of our day, and remember that truth alone is strong.

# Root Out of Hearts All Bitterness and Hatred

**Catholic**

**Bishops of U. S.**

*November 14, 1958*

Fifteen years ago, when this nation was devoting its energies to a world war designed to maintain human freedom, the Catholic Bishops of the United States issued a prayerful warning to their fellow citizens. We called for the extension of full freedom within the confines of our beloved country. Specifically, we noted the problems faced by Negroes in obtaining the rights that are theirs as Americans. The statement of 1943 said in part:

> In the Providence of God there are among us millions of fellow citizens of the Negro race. We owe to these fellow citizens, who have contributed so largely to the development of our country, and for whose welfare history imposes on us a special obligation of justice, to see that they have in fact the rights which are given them in our Constitution. This means not only political equality but also fair economic and educational opportunities, a just share in public-welfare projects, good housing without exploitation, and a full chance for the social advancement of their race.

In the intervening years, considerable progress was made in achieving these goals. The Negro race, brought to this country in slavery, continued its quiet but determined march toward the goal of equal rights and equal opportunity. During and after the second World War, great and even spectacular advances were made in the obtaining of voting rights, good education, better-paying jobs and adequate housing. Through the efforts of men of good will, of every race and creed and from all parts of the nation, the barriers of prejudice and discrimination were slowly but inevitably eroded.

## Hearts

*(Continued)*

Because this method of quiet conciliation produced such excellent results, we have preferred the path of action to that of exhortation. Unfortunately, however, it appears that, in recent years, the issues have become confused and the march toward justice and equality has been slowed if not halted in some areas. The transcendent moral issues involved have become obscured and possibly forgotten.

### *Nation Divided*

Our nation now stands divided by the problems of compulsory segregation of the races and the opposing demand for racial justice. No region of our land is immune from strife and division resulting from this problem. In one area, the key issue may concern the schools. In another, it may be conflicts over housing. Job discrimination may be the focal point in still other sectors. But all these issues have one main point in common. They reflect the determination of our Negro people, and we hope the overwhelming majority of our white citizens, to see that our colored citizens obtain their full rights as given to them by God, the Creator of all, and guaranteed by the democratic traditions of our nation.

There are many facets to the problems raised by the quest for racial justice. There are issues of law, of history, of economics and of sociology. There are questions of procedure and technique. There are conflicts in cultures. Volumes have been written on each of these phases. Their importance we do not deny. But the time has come, in our considered and prayerful judgment, to cut through the maze of secondary or less-essential issues and to come to the heart of the problem.

The heart of the race question is moral and religious. It concerns the rights of man and our attitude toward our fellow man. If our attitude is governed by the great Christian law of love of neighbor and respect for his rights, then we can work out harmoniously the techniques for making legal, educational, economic and social adjustments. But if our hearts are poisoned by hatred, or even by indifference toward the welfare and rights of our fellow men, then our nation faces a grave internal crisis.

No one who bears the name of Christian can deny the universal love of God for all mankind. When Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, "took on the form of man" (Phil. 2, 7) and walked among men, He taught as the first two laws of life the love of God and the love of fellow man. "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, that you have love, one for the other" (John 13, 35). He offered His life in sacrifice for all mankind. His parting mandate to His followers was to "teach all nations" (Matt. 28, 19).

### *Universal Faith*

Our Christian faith is of its nature universal. It knows not the distinctions of race, color, or nationhood. The missionaries of the church have spread throughout the world, visiting with equal impartiality nations such as China and India, whose ancient cultures antedate the coming of the Saviour, and the primitive tribes of the Americas. The

love of Christ and the love of the Christian, knows no bounds. In the words of Pope Pius XII, addressed to American Negro publishers 12 years ago, "All men are brothered in Jesus Christ; for He, through God, became also man, became a member of the human family, a brother of all" (May 27, 1946).

Even those who do not accept our Christian tradition should at least acknowledge that God has implanted in the souls of all men some knowledge of the natural moral law and a respect for its teachings. Reason alone taught philosophers through the ages respect for the sacred dignity of each human being and the fundamental rights of man. Every man has an equal right to life, to justice before the law, to marry and rear a family under human conditions, and to an equitable opportunity to use the goods of this earth for his needs and those of his family.

From these solemn truths, there follow certain conclusions vital for a proper approach to the problems that trouble us today. First, we must repeat the principle—embodied in our Declaration of Independence—that all men are equal in the sight of God. By equal we mean that they are created by God and redeemed by His Divine Son, that they are bound by His Law, and that God desires them as His friends in the eternity of heaven. This fact confers upon all men human dignity and human rights. Men are unequal in talent and achievement. They differ in culture and personal characteristics.

Some are saintly, some seem to be evil, most are men of good will, though beset with human frailty. On the basis of personal differences we may distinguish among our fellow men, remembering always the admonition: "Let him who is without sin . . . cast the first stone . . . " (Jn. 8, 7). But discrimination based on the accidental fact of race or color, and, as such, injurious to human rights regardless of personal qualities or achievements, cannot be reconciled with the truth that God has created all men with equal rights and equal dignity.

Secondly, we are bound to love our fellow man. The Christian love we bespeak is not a matter of emotional likes or dislikes. It is a firm purpose to do good to all men, to the extent that ability and opportunity permit.

### *Reasons*

Among all races and national groups, class distinctions are inevitably made on the basis of like-mindedness or a community of interests. Such distinctions are normal and constitute a universal social phenomenon. They are accidental, however, and are subject to change as conditions change. It is unreasonable and injurious to the rights of others that a factor such as race, by and of itself, should be made a cause of discrimination and a basis for unequal treatment in our mutual relations.

The question then arises: Can enforced segregation be reconciled with the Christian view of our fellow man? In our judgment it cannot, and this for two fundamental reasons.

1. Legal segregation, or any form of compulsory segregation, in itself and by its very nature imposes a stigma of inferiority upon the segregated people. Even if the now-obsolete Court doctrine of "separate but equal" had been carried out to the fullest extent, so that

## Hearts

*(Continued)*

all public and semipublic facilities were, in fact, equal, there is nonetheless the judgment that an entire race, by the sole fact of race and regardless of individual qualities, is not fit to associate on equal terms with members of another race.

We cannot reconcile such a judgment with the Christian view of man's nature and rights. Here again it is appropriate to cite the language of Pope Pius XII: "God did not create a human family made up of segregated, dissociated, mutually independent members. No; He would have them all united by the bond of total love of Him and consequent self-dedication to assisting each other to maintain that bond intact" (Sept. 7, 1956).

### *Historical Fact*

2. It is a matter of historical fact that segregation in our country has led to oppressive conditions and the denial of basic human rights for the Negro. This is evident in the fundamental fields of education, job opportunity and housing. Flowing from these areas of neglect and discrimination are problems of health and the sordid train of evils so often associated with the consequent slum conditions. Surely Pope Pius XII must have had these conditions in mind when he said just two months ago: "It is only too well known, alas, to what excesses pride of race and racial hate can lead. The Church has always been energetically opposed to attempts of genocide or practices arising from what is called the 'color bar'" (Sept. 5, 1958).

One of the tragedies of racial oppression is that the evils we have cited are being used as excuses to continue the very conditions that so strongly fostered such evils. Today we are told that Negroes, Indians and also some Spanish-speaking Americans differ too much in culture and achievements to be assimilated in our schools, factories and neighborhoods. Some decades back the same charge was made against the immigrant: Irish, Jewish, Italian, Polish, Hungarian, German, Russian. In both instances differences were used by some as a basis for discrimination and even for bigoted ill-treatment. The immigrant, fortunately, has achieved his rightful status in the American community. Economic opportunity was wide open and educational equality was not denied to him.

Negro citizens seek these same opportunities. They wish an education that does not carry with it any stigma of inferiority. They wish economic advancement based on merit and skill. They wish their civil rights as American citizens. They wish acceptance based upon proved ability and achievement. No one who truly loves God's children will deny them this opportunity.

### *Courage*

To work for this principle amid passions and misunderstandings will not be easy. It will take courage. But quiet and perservering courage has always been the mark of a true follower of Christ.

We urge that concrete plans in this field be based on prudence. Prudence may be called a virtue that inclines us to view problems in their proper per-

spective. It aids us to use the proper means to secure our aim.

The problems we inherit today are rooted in decades, even centuries, of custom and cultural patterns. Changes in deep-rooted attitudes are not made overnight. When we are confronted with complex and far-reaching evils, it is not a sign of weakness or timidity to distinguish among remedies and reforms. Some changes are more necessary than others. Some are relatively easy to achieve. Others seem impossible at this time. What may succeed in one area may fail in another.

It is a sign of wisdom, rather than weakness, to study carefully the problems we face, to prepare for advances, and to bypass the nonessential if it interferes with essential progress. We may well deplore a gradualism that is merely a cloak for inaction. But we equally deplore rash impetuosity that would sacrifice the achievements of decades in ill-timed and ill-considered ventures. In concrete matters we distinguish between prudence and inaction by asking the question: Are we sincerely and earnestly acting to solve these problems, We distinguish between prudence and rashness by seeking the prayerful and considered judgment of experienced counselors who have achieved success in meeting similar problems.

For this reason we hope and earnestly pray that responsible and sober-minded Americans of all religious faiths, in all areas of our land, will seize the mantle of leadership from the agitator and the racist. It is vital that we act now and act decisively. All must act quietly, courageously and prayerfully before it is too late.

For the welfare of our nation we call upon all to root out from their heart bitterness and hatred. The tasks we face are indeed difficult. But hearts inspired by Christian love will surmount these diffiiculties. Clearly, then, these problems are vital and urgent. May God give this nation the grace to meet the challenge it faces. For the sake of generations of future Americans, and indeed of all humanity, we cannot fail.

---

A report from the National Council of Churches has asked churches to "express strong support for the implementation of the Supreme Court decision concerning school integration. The report, issued November 28, 1958, is the result of a recent gathering of 600 lay and clergy delegates at the Fifth World Order Study Conference. The conference was sponsored by the National Council.

The report called upon "the churches to give strong support for policies in each state which provide for positive steps toward the integration of schools."

"The churches must begin with themselves. There is a great gulf between what they say on a national or denomination level and what they do or encourage or permit in many communities."

# Give Positive Witness

**United**

**Church Women**

**8th National Assembly**

*October 30, 1958*

As responsible Christians, we claim the right to obey God in the affairs of men. We believe that the moral substance of the Supreme Court decision with regard to integration in the public schools is in accord with Christian concensus and conscience and therefore deserves Christian support. Moreover, we recognize the inescapable fact that in all states of these United States desegration in the various public facilities, including public schools, is the law of the land and ultimately this law must prevail if our nation is to avoid anarchy, loss of self respect, loss of any major claim to moral leadership in world affairs.

We deplore the unchristian acts and attitudes of some of our citizens expressing hatred of certain of our fellow-citizens, but we believe that there are great reservoirs of good will among concerned Christians in our respective communities. Even the present tensions cannot obscure the fact that significant progress has been made in race relations. We recognize that concerned Christians in our communities who made that progress possible continue to be the Christian conscience of their communities. We, in this Assembly, wish to reinforce and undergird their efforts by the following recommendations:

1. That we continue to work toward the elimination of discrimination in housing, public schools, health and recreational facilities, transportation and public accommodations;
2. That we support any effort in our local communities to establish intergroup organizations, interracial councils to work on community problems;
3. That we urge the President of the United States to call a White House Conference on integration as soon as possible;
4. That we in our churches give a positive Christian witness by working with the people in the community in which the church is located; and that we use the church facilities to work toward a more inclusive fellowship rather than lend them to purposes for perpetuating segregation.

# . . . Unquote

" . . . the time has come when governmental officials must tell their people the unpleasant truth without equivocation, because, unless the people know the truth and understand the alternatives involved, only anarchy can result. Integration and segregation must cease to be political issues exploited for political gain."

*Ralph E. Odum,*
*Assistant Attorney General,*
*Florida,*
*Quoted in* U. S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT

• • •

"Teachers are asking me by the dozens, 'What shall we do about next year, Shall we leave the system or the state?' We're going to lose these teachers and the State of Virginia is going to lose them."

*J. J. Brewbaker, Superintendent,*
*Norfolk Public Schools*
*Quoted in* ATLANTA CONSTITUTION

• • •

"There are indications that Virginians in increasing numbers are coming to the realization that massive resistance has run its course and that further reliance upon it is futile. There is developing support for the view that some integration is preferable by far to closed schools and no public education at all . . . "

*From an editorial in*
ROANOKE (VA.) TIMES

"We believe that a strong and complete public school system is vital to the educational and economic life of Norfolk. It is essential in the attempts of the community to attract and hold business enterprise. It is essential in encouraging families of servicemen, on duty in the area, to live in Norfolk, and to insure that Naval facilities now maintained in Norfolk are not diverted to other areas because Norfolk public schools are closed."

*The Norfolk Committee*
*for Public Schools*
*From statement of purpose*

• • •

"Talking . . . in terms of realities, we should recognize the United States Supreme Court decision can only be changed by the Court, itself, or by a constitutional amendment declaring racial segregation in public schools permissible. And no one seriously expects that either of these things will happen."

*Governor Leroy Collins*
*of Florida*
*Quoted in* WASHINGTON POST AND TIMES HERALD

• • •

"We unalterably oppose all practices of racial segregation. We withhold permission to use our church buildings as segregated schools in an effort to disobey the mandate of the Supreme Court."

*The Evangelical United*
*Brethren Church*
*Quoted by* ASSOCIATED PRESS